



## Virginia Middle School Association Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2013

Liz Phillips, Editor

Email: [ljphillips@wcs.k12.va.us](mailto:ljphillips@wcs.k12.va.us)

### *A Message from our Virginia Middle School Association President—*

Dear Middle Level Educators:

It is my pleasure to bring you greetings from the Virginia Middle School Association! I hope that you have had some time this summer to relax and enjoy your family and friends!

The Virginia Middle School Association is an alliance of individuals and representatives from organizations which advocate for academic excellence in a supportive equitable learning environment responsive to the diverse interests, talents, accomplishments and needs of young adolescents.

During the past two years the VMSA has sponsored a one day workshop at James Madison University featuring teachers and Administrators from your schools and middle level gurus such as Rick Wormeli and Jack Berckmeyer. Additionally, the Virginia Middle School Association is an affiliate of the Association for Middle Level Education which means that middle level educators in Virginia have access to AMLE resources. The conference this year is scheduled for October 25<sup>th</sup> at James Madison University. Debbie Silva will be the keynote. If anyone is interested in presenting at the conference, please email your Region Director.

Each month you will receive this newsletter full of information to be shared with all middle level educators. The goal will be to provide teachers with current tools and resources that will support them in the classroom. Our goals are to: 1)keep the newsletter content teacher friendly; 2) a quick teacher reference and; 3)loaded with tools that teachers can use immediately in the classroom.

I am excited about the opportunity of working in a collegial way with every middle level educator in the Commonwealth of Virginia and I hope to see all of you at the VMSA Conference in October!

Have a great school year!

Sincerely,

*Gayle C. Sutton*

President

Virginia Middle School Association

### **AN NEW INTERACTIVE FEATURE**

Teachers are great innovators and problem-solvers. Each month the editor of this publication will pose a question and ask members to submit their solutions. The person who submits the solution that a group of panelists likes best will receive a lovely gift card in the mail. The winning solution will be published in the next edition of the VMSA newsletter.

#### **STUDENT BACKPACKS**

*Middle school students can lose anything in their backpacks! Some students do a great job keeping backpacks organized, but others find last month's homework squashed in the bottom when they go diving for what's due today. How do you help your students keep their backpacks neat and organized?*

Send your solution to Liz Phillips, Editor. Email address: [ljphillips@wcs.k12.va.us](mailto:ljphillips@wcs.k12.va.us) by October 3.

# VMSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday, October 25, 2013  
Festival Conference & Student Center  
James Madison University  
Harrisonburg, Virginia



**Location! Location! Location!** If you have attended a VMSA conference since it was moved to a one-day action-packed format, you don't need anyone to tell you how great the changes are! If you are unable to take three days away from the classroom to attend a professional conference, then this conference is for YOU! The VMSA Board of Directors has created an event that will fill your spirit and give you giddy-up-and-go that

will last many, many months. Because budgets are tight, the cost is a bargain, and all the best things about a traditional conference are still in place.

Our keynote speaker is Dr. Debbie Silver, a motivational speaker and author who delivers powerful messages to conference attendees, and you really do NOT want to miss her inspirational brand of humor and reality when she shares ideas about today's middle schools. She is the well-known author of books including *Drumming to the Beat of Different Marchers*, and *Fall Down 7 Times, Get up 8: Teaching Kids to Succeed*.



The price of the conference is more than reasonable. It includes continental breakfast items, a fantastic catered lunch, snacks, and all the break-out sessions and Schools to Watch round-tables presentations. During the banquet, there will be several reconitions—including something new—Teacher of the Year and Educator of the Year.

To find the registration form for the annual conference, visit [www.VMSA.org](http://www.VMSA.org). You will find registration materials and information about hotel reservations close to JMU.

**ACT NOW! THERE IS LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE, AND YOU DON'T WANT TO BE LEFT OUT!**

*(If you have a great presentation, go to the VMSA website for presentation proposal forms—or contact your regional director.)*

Do you subscribe to the VDOE e-News that is delivered to teacher mailboxes each week? Do you need the latest and newest resources sent directly to you so you never have to hunt for them?



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### INTERESTING CALENDAR OBSERVATIONS

- 22 First day of Autumn  
Elephant Appreciation Day
- 25 National Comic Book Day
- 26 Johnny Appleseed Day
- 27 Crush a Can Day
- 27 Native American Day
- 29 Confucius Day

#### Special Weeks in September

- Constitution Week (third week)
- National Child Care Week (third week)
- National Flower Week (third week)
- National Dog Week (fourth week)

#### September

- American Breakfast Month
- Children's Eye Health and Safety Month
- National Chicken Month
- National Good Manners Month
- National School Success Month
- National Rice Month
- Read-A-New-Book Month

#### A Way to Use This Resource

**September 29** is Confucius Day. Students can have a quick lesson on that kind of wisdom and then try to write their own sayings and fortunes. There are fortune cookie recipes online if you want to take the exploration into ancient pearls of wisdom that far.

**October 16** is Dictionary Day. Students could look up a vocabulary word in your weekly lesson and then recreate a better dictionary entry that includes an illustration or a comic book page that truly explains what the word means.



### INTERESTING CALENDAR OBSERVATIONS

- 1 Homemade Cookies Day  
World Vegetarian Day
- 2 International Day of Non-Violence
- 4 National Denim Day
- 5 World Teacher Day
- 7 World Habitat Day  
Child Health Day
- 12 Farmer's Day
- 14 Columbus Day (Observed)
- 15 National Grouch Day
- 16 Dictionary Day  
World Food Day
- 17 Black Poetry Day

#### Special Weeks in October

- World Space Week (first week)
- Fire Prevention Week (second week)
- National School Lunch Week (second week)
- Teen Read Week (second week)

#### October

- Computer Learning Month
- National Clock Month
- Family History Month
- National Dessert Month
- National Pasta Month
- National Hispanic Heritage Month
- National Pizza Festival Month
- National Popcorn Popping Month
- National Stamp Collecting Month